

# RACE TO THE TOP

## Louisiana Report

Year 1: 2012

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U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

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June 2013

# Executive Summary

## Race to the Top overview

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. ARRA provided \$4.35 billion for the Race to the Top fund, of which approximately \$4 billion was used to fund comprehensive statewide reform grants under the Race to the Top program.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) awarded Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants to 11 States and the District of Columbia. The Race to the Top program is a competitive four-year grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and improving high school graduation rates; and ensuring students are prepared for success in college and careers.

Since the Race to the Top Phase 1 and 2 competitions, the Department has made additional grants under Race to the Top Phase 3, Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge, and Race to the Top – District. In 2011, the Department awarded Phase 3 grants to seven additional States, which were finalists in the 2010 Race to the Top Phase 2 competition. Also in 2011, the Department made nine awards under the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge to improve quality and expand access to early learning programs, and close the achievement gap for children with high needs. In 2012, four more States received Early Learning Challenge grants. Additionally, in 2012, the Department made awards to 16 applicants through the Race to the Top – District competition to support local educational agencies (LEAs) implementing locally developed plans to personalize and deepen student learning, directly improve student achievement and educator effectiveness, close achievement gaps, and prepare every student to succeed in college and careers.

The Race to the Top program is built on the framework of comprehensive reform in four education reform areas:

- Adopting rigorous standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices;
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and
- Turning around the lowest-performing schools.

Since education is a complex system, sustained and lasting instructional improvement in classrooms, schools, LEAs, and States will not be achieved through piecemeal change. Race to the Top requires that States and LEAs participating in the State's Race to the Top plan (participating LEAs) take into account their local context to design and implement the most effective and innovative approaches that meet the needs of their educators, students, and families.<sup>2</sup>

## Race to the Top program review

As part of the Department's commitment to supporting States as they implement ambitious reform agendas, the Department established the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to administer, among others, the Race to the Top program. The goal of the ISU is to provide assistance to States as they implement unprecedented and comprehensive reforms to improve student outcomes. Consistent with this goal, the Department has developed a Race to the Top program review process that not only addresses the Department's responsibilities for fiscal and programmatic oversight, but is also designed to identify areas in which Race to the Top grantees need assistance and support to meet their goals. Specifically, the ISU works with Race to the Top grantees to differentiate support based on individual State needs, and helps States work with each other and with experts to achieve and sustain educational reforms that improve student outcomes. In partnership with the ISU, the Reform Support Network (RSN) offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to Race to the Top grantees. The RSN's purpose is to support Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.

Grantees are accountable for the implementation of their approved Race to the Top plans, and the information and data gathered throughout the program review help to inform the Department's management and support of the Race to the Top grantees, as well as provide appropriate and timely updates to the public on their progress. In the event that adjustments are required to an approved plan, the grantee must submit a formal amendment request to the Department for consideration. States may submit for Department approval amendment requests to a plan and budget, provided such changes do not significantly affect the scope or objectives of the approved plans. In the event that the Department determines that a grantee is not meeting its goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the Department will take appropriate enforcement action(s), consistent with 34 CFR section 80.43 in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The remaining funds were awarded under the Race to the Top Assessment program. More information about the Race to the Top Assessment program is available at [www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment](http://www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment).

<sup>2</sup> Participating LEAs are those LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's Memorandum of Understanding with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must sub-grant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA.

<sup>3</sup> More information about the ISU's program review process, State APR data, and State Scopes of Work can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>.

# Executive Summary

## State-specific summary report

The Department uses the information gathered during the review process (e.g., through monthly calls, onsite reviews, and Annual Performance Reports (APRs)) to draft State-specific summary reports.<sup>4</sup> The State-specific summary report serves as an assessment of a State's annual Race to the Top implementation. The Year 1 report for Phase 3 grantees highlights successes and accomplishments, identifies challenges, and provides lessons learned from implementation from approximately December 2011 through December 2012.

## State's education reform agenda<sup>5</sup>

Louisiana's strategy to dramatically increase student achievement is to ensure that every child is taught by an effective teacher and every teacher is supported by an effective leader. Since 1996, Louisiana reports that it has made several very challenging, high-impact changes to push forward reforms that will expand and reshape its efforts to partner with LEAs to improve the educational opportunities available to students and advance the goals of Louisiana's reform agenda.

The State has 124 LEAs and 1,424 schools. Of the State's more than 673,000 students, some 69 percent live in poverty. Louisiana has made some encouraging progress in improving student outcomes with reforms addressing standards and assessments, improving data collection and use, turning around chronically low-achieving schools, and supporting teachers and leaders.

Recently, the State announced a historic increase in the percentage of students graduating from high school in four years. Louisiana's Cohort Graduation rate reached an all-time high, exceeding 70 percent. Louisiana also posted a sharp decrease in the number of drop-outs, which declined by 26 percent in 2010. Forty-two of Louisiana's 70 school districts saw gains in the percentage of students at *Basic* and above proficient on State achievement tests from school year (SY) 2009-2010 to SY 2010-2011, up from the prior year, when 37 districts achieved gains.

Louisiana credits much of its progress to the adoption of statewide standards and assessments that began more than a decade ago, and the passage of Act 54 in 2010, a comprehensive evaluation law requiring annual student achievement-based evaluations of all teachers and administrators. It also adopted and implemented an integrated approach to coordinate the delivery of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with new educator evaluation training and capacity-building activities for districts and schools. The State also

invested in a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Goal Office to advance STEM education through the development and implementation of innovative and effective programs, curricula, and instructional training.

Overall, the State's reform agenda seeks to build capacity of, and provide support to, LEAs statewide as they transition to the new teacher and principal evaluation system, Compass, and implementation of CCSS. Also part of LDOE's reform agenda is instituting a comprehensive human capital strategy to ensure that there is an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school; increasing the number of schools implementing school intervention best practices; and supporting charter school expansion. The planned activities using the State's \$17,946,236 Race to the Top award are aligned with its reform agenda, *Louisiana Believes*.

## State Year 1 summary

### Accomplishments

Accomplishments noted by the State include the creation of five Network Support Teams.<sup>6</sup> The Network Support Teams are tasked with increasing the capacity of all LEAs to implement and sustain education reform. Network Support Teams also serve as the direct lines of communication between LEAs and LDOE. During the first year of the grant the Network Support Teams provided technical assistance, resources, and training to support LEAs' implementation of the CCSS and the transition to the new teacher and principal evaluation system, Compass. LDOE also cites, as an accomplishment, progress with increasing teachers' and principals' use of the State's instructional improvement system, the Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations (EAGLE). Thirty-nine training sessions on how to use EAGLE and the data generated by the system reached 1,550 participants.

### Challenges

The State's major challenge was delays in the implementation of Race to the Top activities. LDOE's implementation of its Race to the Top plan was delayed because of new State leadership and the need to align the Race to the Top plan with other statewide reform efforts.<sup>7</sup> LDOE is challenged with fully implementing a continuous improvement process that focuses on the quality of implementation and includes timely feedback loops for teachers, principals, administrators, and Network Support Team members.

<sup>4</sup>Additional State-specific data on progress against annual performance measures and goals reported in the Year 1 APRs can be found on the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

<sup>5</sup>This section reflects counts of schools and students reported in the State's Phase 3 application.

<sup>6</sup>As described later in the report, the Network Support Teams replace the Trailblazer Initiative.

<sup>7</sup>On January 11, 2012, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) selected John White as Louisiana's State Superintendent of Education. In spring 2012, Superintendent White launched a statewide reform agenda, *Louisiana Believes*, with the main goal of ensuring that all students in the State are on track to attain a college degree or succeed in a professional career. Furthermore, LDOE submitted an ESEA flexibility request in February 2012 that was approved in May 2012.

# Executive Summary

## Looking ahead to Year 2

In Year 2 the State will continue to provide guidance and support to the Network Support Teams as they assist LEAs with CCSS implementation, transition to the Compass evaluation system, and the use of the EAGLE system. The Network Support Teams will also work with LEAs to develop their Year 2 Scopes of Work. With

contractor support, additional new and revised Advanced Placement (AP) and STEM AP courses are scheduled for Year 2, as is the introduction of the online registration system for AP and STEM AP courses. Contractors also will continue to provide CCSS test bank items for EAGLE, conduct AP Summer Institutes for teachers, and award funds to support the opening of additional charter schools during Year 2.

## State Success Factors

### Building State capacity to support LEAs

During spring and summer 2012, to achieve its goal of having an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school, LDOE developed the Network Support Team structure replacing the Trailblazer initiative.<sup>8</sup> The Network Support Teams became Louisiana's LEA support and capacity-building strategy to implement and sustain education reform.

The State established five Network Support Teams to serve networks of LEAs across Louisiana. Each Network Support Team is comprised of a leader and 12-19 team members. LEAs are grouped into networks based on common characteristics and needs. Network Support Teams meet with LEAs three times per year to complete a cycle that includes: goal-setting before the school year begins; assessing progress midway through the school year; and determining if LEAs achieved goals at the end of the school year. Network Support Team progress was tracked and shared at weekly meetings between Network Support Leaders and the Network Chief of Staff.

In fall 2012 Network Support Teams, along with LDOE staff members, conducted district capacity assessment meetings with LEAs. The Network Support Teams used data from the capacity assessment meetings to inform and facilitate the goal-setting meeting for each LEA. During the goal-setting meeting each LEA identified specific areas for which they needed additional support as they prepared to transition to CCSS; implement the new teacher and principal evaluation system, Compass; and use the EAGLE system to inform classroom instruction. As a result of this process, all LEAs established SY 2012-2013 goals related to student performance as well as CCSS and Compass implementation. Throughout fall 2012, Network Support Teams worked in LEAs to provide LEA-specific training and support (identified during the goal-setting process) for CCSS and Compass implementation.

LDOE also created a CCSS Educator Cadre to support CCSS implementation at the district and school level. The CCSS Educator Cadre is made up of classroom teachers, identified by principals and district leadership, who receive additional CCSS training and take on extra duties related to CCSS implementation. The CCSS Educator Cadre assists with reviewing and selecting educational tools, materials, and rubrics to be housed in the State's online resource repository for district wide access. The CCSS Educator Cadre is a sustainability strategy for LDOE, as the goal is to have a CCSS Educator Cadre member in every school who can provide onsite support to teachers.

### Support and accountability for LEAs

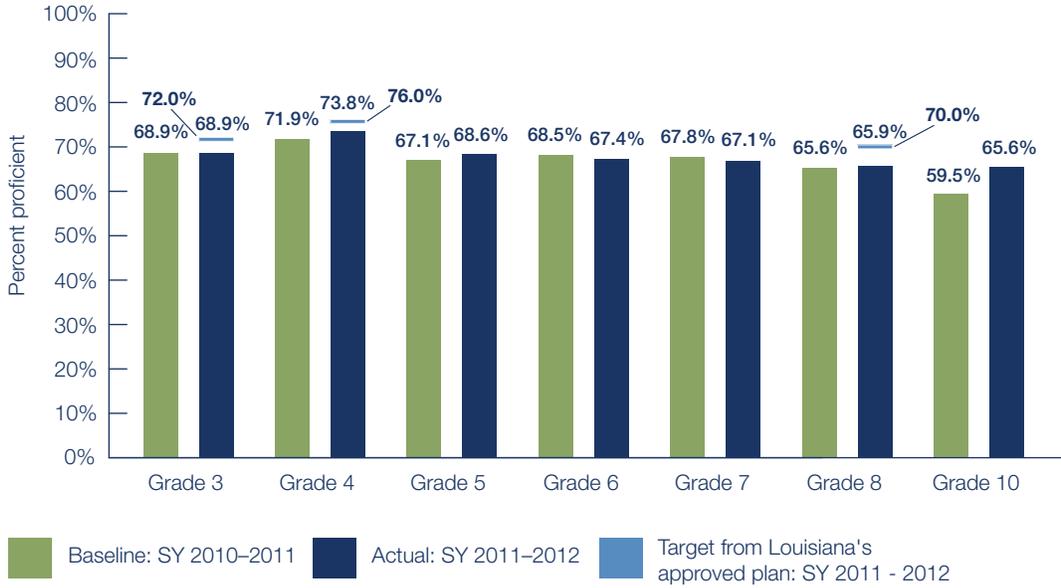
LDOE established a plan for sub-recipient monitoring to ensure that participating LEAs' implementation of Race to the Top activities is on track. The plan requires LEAs to report on progress and expenditures quarterly through the Indistar system, and includes annual performance reviews conducted by LDOE.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>To promote and encourage participation in advancing the State's Reform Plan, LDOE created the Trailblazer Initiative. This initiative included LEAs committed to reform who worked with the District Support Office to increase awareness, adoption, and implementation of key reforms in the areas of human capital, school turnaround, instructional improvement, and organizational excellence, with an emphasis on improving STEM education. Trailblazer LEAs received priority access to the District Support Officers and Reform Teams, facilitation and consultation support from LDOE, special grant opportunities, professional learning communities, and other targeted services.

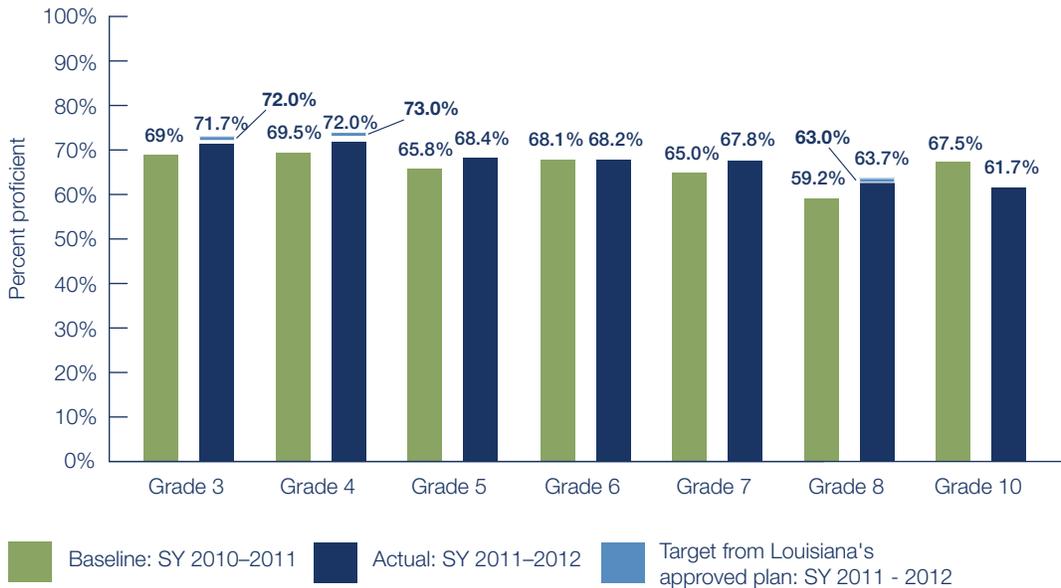
<sup>9</sup>Indistar is a web-based system that includes reporting, progress tracking, and other functions.

# State Success Factors

## Student Proficiency on Louisiana's ELA Assessment



## Student Proficiency on Louisiana's Mathematics Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: September 17, 2012.

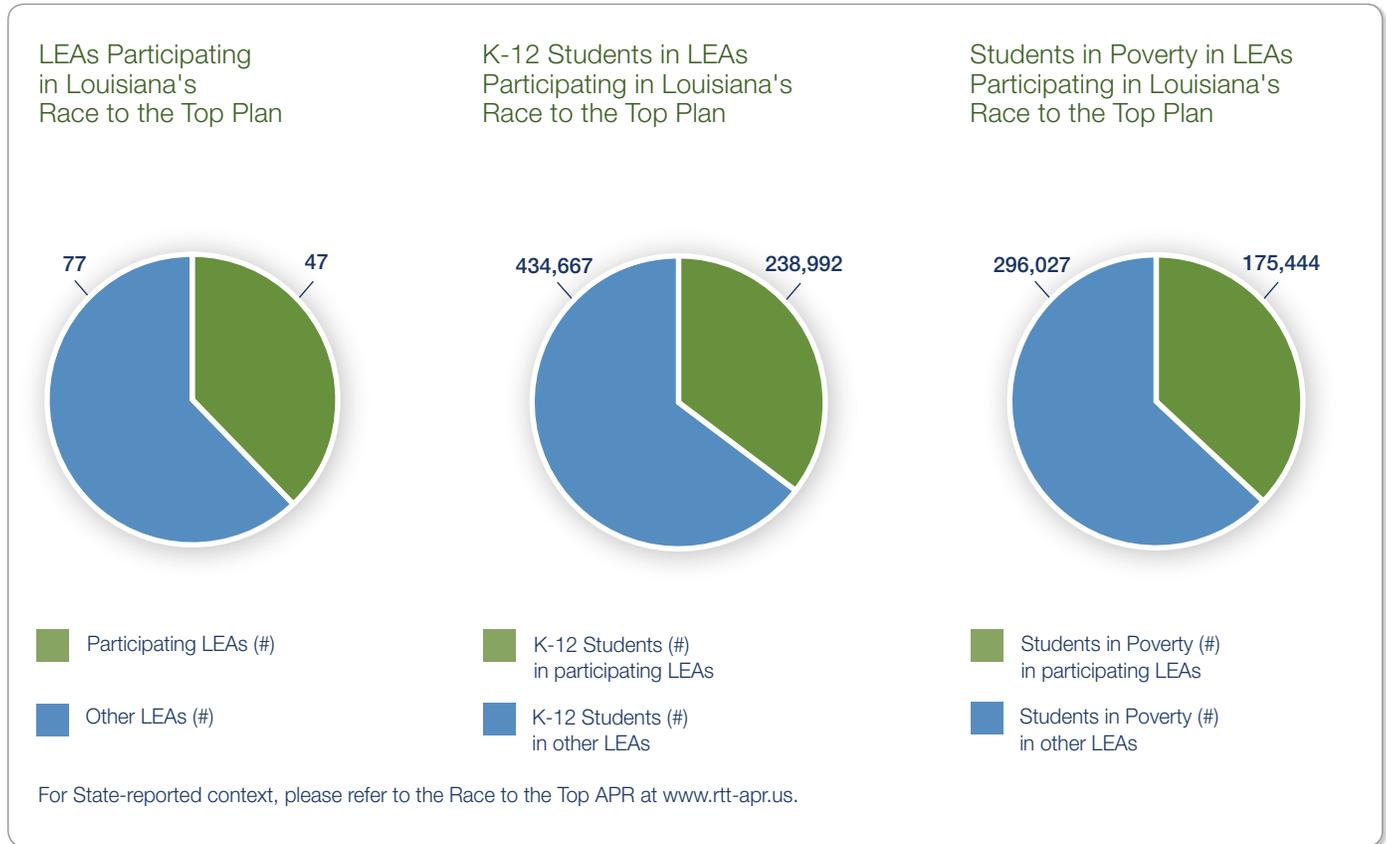
NOTE: Over the last two years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

# State Success Factors

## LEA participation

Louisiana reported 47 participating LEAs as of June 30, 2012. This represents 35 percent of the State's K-12 students and 37 percent of its students in poverty.



## Stakeholder engagement

Network Support Teams used professional learning communities (PLCs) to engage LEAs. PLCs were convened based on needs identified by LEAs. The PLCs provide a forum for all LEAs within a network to discuss best practices, successes and challenges, as well as problem solve issues common across LEAs related to CCSS implementation, the transition to Compass, and using EAGLE. As of December 2012, eight PLC convenings had been held and the State reported changes in the tools used by the Network Support Team as one outcome of PLCs.

## Continuous improvement

Louisiana's plan for continuous improvement includes conducting quarterly meetings with all Race to the Top project managers to discuss implementation strengths and weaknesses, determine what additional resources might be needed, and to ensure alignment between the budgetary and programmatic aspects of implementation. Additionally, the cycle established for the LEA-Network Support Teams includes both a midyear and end-of-year assessment of progress. The midyear assessment identifies areas where LEAs need additional support and resources in order to meet the goals by the end of the year.

Continuous improvement is also supported by feedback that LDOE receives from LEAs via surveys and information from Network Support Team calls. LDOE conducts weekly calls with Network Support Team Leaders to monitor quality and review completed activities, as well as to identify training and resources needed by the Network Support Team.

## State Success Factors

### Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

An early success and challenge to LDOE was aligning its Race to the Top plan with the new statewide reform, *Louisiana Believes*. LDOE was able to streamline work processes and re-organize internal structures, in part, due to aligning its Race to the Top plan with *Louisiana Believes*. For example, LDOE eliminated the Trailblazer Initiative and replaced it with Network Support Teams. The Network Support Teams are comprised of staff from across LDOE programs and offices, providing each team with a range of expertise and experience in content areas, federal programs, district administration.

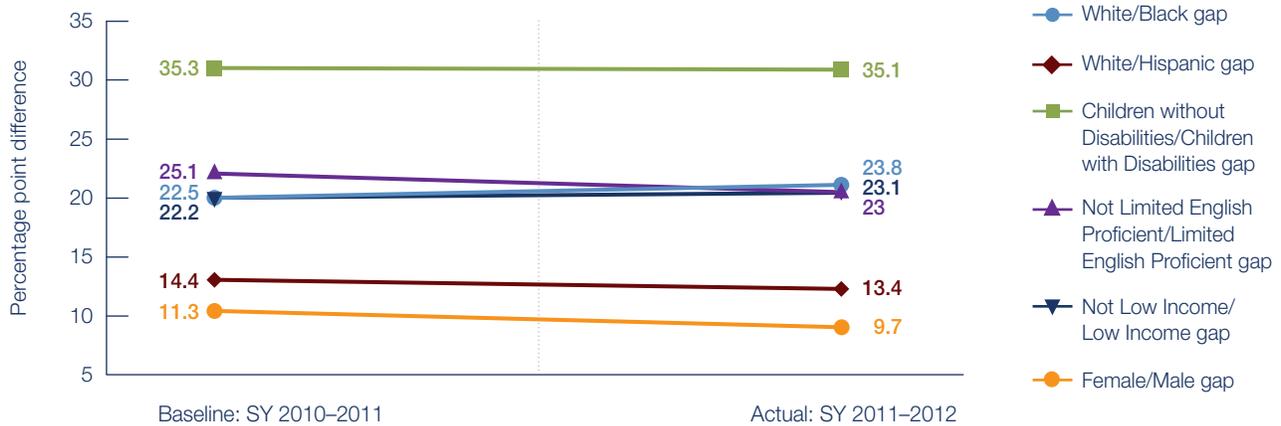
However, the State's implementation of Network Support Teams caused delays as time was needed to group LEAs into networks and identify staff to serve on the Network Support Teams. Temporary Network Support Teams were created, trained, and assigned to work with LEA networks during spring and early summer of 2012. LDOE assessed the temporary Network Support Teams' performance before designating permanent members and leads to Network Support Teams. Permanent Network Support Teams were assigned to LEA networks in July 2012. An additional challenge

was the transition from temporary to permanent Network Support Teams. This transition disrupted the communication line previously established between LEAs and the Network Support Teams. Some LEAs were unclear about whom to contact with requests for technical assistance and, in some cases, LDOE's District Support Office did not forward requests to the correct Network Support Team in a timely manner.

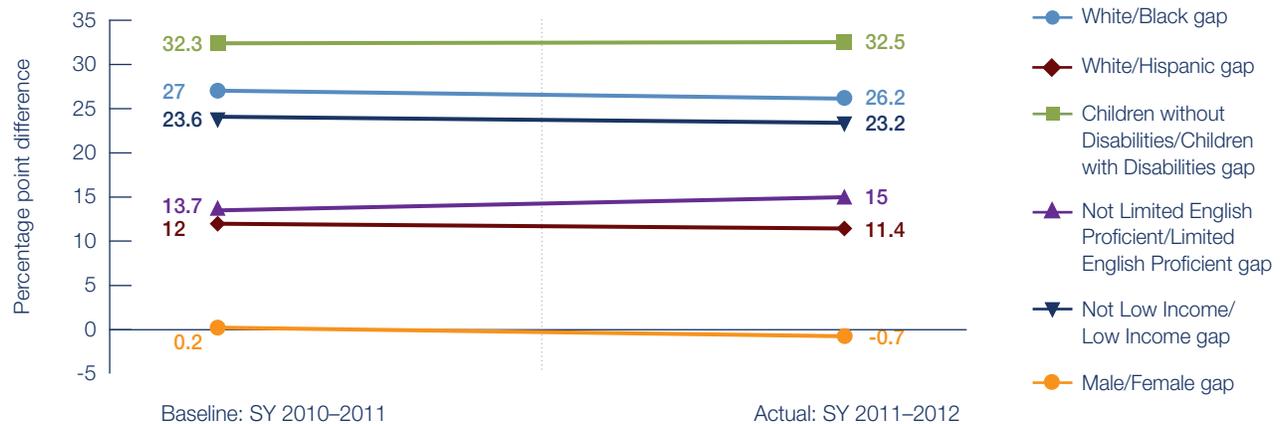
While the State plans to continue quarterly meetings with all Race to the Top project managers and hold weekly calls with Network Support Teams, additional processes that focus on quality of implementation might be needed.

# State Success Factors

## Achievement Gap on Louisiana's ELA Assessment



## Achievement Gap on Louisiana's Mathematics Assessment



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: September 17, 2012.

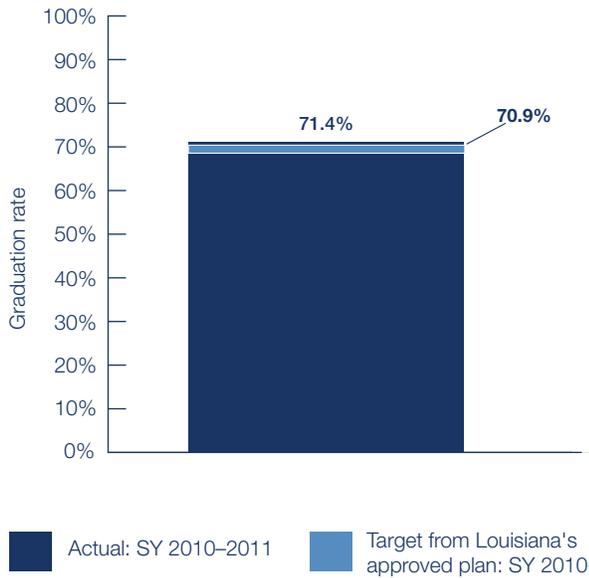
NOTE: Over the last two years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

Numbers in the graph represent the gap in a school year between two subgroups on the State's ELA and mathematics assessments. Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing subgroup from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing subgroup to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two subgroups. If the achievement gap narrowed between two subgroups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two subgroups, the line will slope upward.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

# State Success Factors

## High School Graduation Rates



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: September 27, 2012.

NOTE: The Department has transitioned to the four-year regulatory cohort graduation rate. Additionally, the Department has transitioned from five to seven racial and ethnic groups used for reporting data. For graduation rates, States will report on the seven racial and ethnic groups for the SY 2010-2011 data.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

# Standards and Assessments

Implementing rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career is an integral aspect of education reform in Race to the Top States.

## Supporting the transition to college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments

The State will use Race to the Top funds to support three key activities in this area – providing professional development to support CCSS implementation; offering additional AP courses, including AP courses in the STEM fields; and aligning the high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with CCSS and measuring college- and career readiness of students.

In July 2010, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) adopted the CCSS. The plan for CCSS transition included teaching CCSS through a new State curriculum in kindergarten and first grade in SY 2012-2013 and using the transitional State curriculum in second through twelfth grades. In SY 2013-2014 Louisiana plans for educators to implement the CCSS using the new State curriculum in pre-kindergarten through third grade and the transitional State curriculum in fourth through twelfth grades. In SY 2014-2015 the CCSS will be fully implemented through the new State curriculum in all grades, pre-kindergarten through twelve. Aligned with this implementation timeline, the State's Race to the Top plan includes an array of teacher and leader trainings to support CCSS implementation.

In June 2012, LDOE staff delivered training to the Network Support Teams and LEAs on aligning curriculum materials and resources to the kindergarten and first grade English language arts (ELA) and mathematics CCSS. Throughout summer 2012, the Network Support Teams conducted Common Core Summer Institutes for all schools and LEAs in the State. The purpose of the Institutes was to provide teachers, principals, and district-level curriculum staff with information relevant to the SY 2012-2013 implementation of the kindergarten and first grade ELA and mathematics CCSS-aligned curricula and the transition to the CCSS for second through twelfth grades.

In November the LDOE entered into contracts with 28 teachers identified to join the CCSS Educator Cadre. The CCSS Educator Cadre members receive additional professional development on CCSS implementation, to provide them with the skills, resources, and tools to provide CCSS professional development at the school level. CCSS Educator Cadre members also assist with reviewing and selecting educational tools, materials, and rubrics to be housed in the State's online resource repository for district wide access. The CCSS

Educator Cadre is a sustainability strategy for LDOE, as the goal is to have a CCSS Educator Cadre member in every school who can provide onsite support to teachers.

To further the goal of ensuring that more students graduate college- and career-ready, the Race to the Top funds are being used to increase the number of AP courses offered, including AP courses in the STEM fields, to students in traditional settings and via the Louisiana Virtual School (LVS).<sup>10</sup> Race to the Top funds support teachers' professional development via AP Summer Institutes and other training.

LDOE proposed increasing the number of schools offering at least two AP and two STEM-focused AP courses in Year 1. In fall 2012, Louisiana issued contracts to revise current LVS courses to ensure alignment with the CCSS, College Board course descriptions, and Louisiana Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and for development of new AP courses, especially STEM-focused AP courses. AP Human Geography and AP Computer Science were the first two LVS courses to be revised to align with the CCSS. LDOE identified the need for two new STEM-focused AP courses, AP Physics, and AP Environmental Science, which will be developed during SY 2012-2013.

Race to the Top funds support teacher and leader AP professional development. During summer 2012, a total of 57 teachers from participating LEAs participated in the three-day, College Board-authorized course, "AP Summer Institutes and Laying the Foundation: Pre-AP." Twenty-five administrators participated in the three-day AP Summer Institute for Administrators during summer 2012.

To measure progress in aligning the State's end of course assessments to CCSS and to measure college- and career-readiness, the Race to the Top plan includes a two-fold strategy. First, the State administered the ACT to all high school students in March 2013. LDOE developed and delivered webinars to inform LEAs about the timeline and administration of the ACT. Second, the State will administer the new online Partnership for Assessment for Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) beginning in SY 2014-2015.

<sup>10</sup>LDOE partnered with four state universities to create Louisiana Virtual School. LVS offer dual enrollment and AP courses to students in low population districts where these options, particularly AP courses, are not available.

# Standards and Assessments

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Louisiana reported in its SY 2011-2012 annual performance report (APR) that 45 percent of schools in participating LEAs offered one or more AP courses in SY 2011-2012, up from three percent in SY 2010-2011. In its SY 2011-2012 APR, Louisiana indicated that it met its targets related to increasing the percent of students meeting ACT college readiness benchmark scores overall (from a baseline of 16 percent in SY 2010-2011 to 17 percent), and in mathematics (from a baseline of 33 percent in SY 2010-2011 to 35 percent), and reading (from a baseline of 45 percent in SY 2010-2011 to 46 percent).

With increased AP course offerings, the State learned that the registration process was a barrier to students enrolling in AP courses. To address this issue, LDOE contracted with a vendor in fall 2012 to develop an online registration system for AP courses, allowing students and parents to view course catalogs and register for AP courses online, rather than requiring them to register through a school guidance counselor. The system will track registration, student participation, and course completion.

While most of their activities are on track, some projects were not completed on time. For example, the State reported that it would determine the effectiveness of the AP Summer Institutes for teachers and leaders by conducting follow-up sessions with participants. The State did not conduct the planned follow-up sessions. As a result, they lack important information about the Year 1 AP training. The State did create a listserve of summer training participants for the purpose of providing updates and information on AP policy, professional development opportunities, and other training opportunities.

Changes to the Race to the Top timeline will challenge contractors in producing eight new and revised STEM and AP courses in Year 2. The Department approved an amendment to alter the timing for course revision and development due to delays in other Race to the Top activities in Year 1.<sup>11</sup> Finally, the State also does not appear to have solid strategies for assessing the effectiveness of other activities of, such as the CCSS Educator Cadre.

## Data Systems to Support Instruction

Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) and instructional improvement systems (IIS) enhance the ability of States to effectively manage, use, and analyze education data to support instruction. Race to the Top States are working to ensure that their data systems are accessible to key stakeholders and that the data support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

### Using data to improve instruction

Louisiana committed to using data to improve instruction prior to receiving Race to the Top funds, and created the Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations (EAGLE) system. EAGLE's functions include: a formative assessment engine, an assessment item bank (which includes various types of items/questions for first through twelfth grades) and a content assessment reporting system. EAGLE provides teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support to systematically manage continuous instructional improvement.

The State's plan is to support teachers' and leaders' use of data to improve instruction by providing training and support to EAGLE users to increase its adoption and use; and creating a benchmarking system that includes formative assessments. These activities will provide teachers and administrators with the ability to use EAGLE to identify student strengths and weaknesses, plan curriculum, access targeted classroom resources, and refine instructional strategies based on student performance.

The State held the first round of EAGLE trainings for LEA staff (teachers, principals, and administrators) in fall 2012, and will provide training annually throughout the grant period. Approximately 1,550 district level staff participated in the 39

<sup>11</sup>LDOE originally planned for three course development or redesign each project year. Under the approved amendment no courses will be produced during Year 1 or 4.

## Data Systems to Support Instruction

training sessions, including 10 workshops that were added to the schedule based on interest from the field. These hands-on training workshops include general training on how to utilize the EAGLE system as well as focused trainings on how to use data and reports generated by the system to inform instruction and classroom practice. Louisiana is also accepting requests for additional EAGLE training from individual districts throughout SY 2012-2013.

Originally, the State planned to support the development of standard pre- and post-test forms for benchmark assessments within EAGLE. However, LDOE is instead expanding the EAGLE test item bank and aligning the existing test items with CCSS in order to align Race to the Top activities with *Louisiana Believe*. With an expanded test item bank, teachers can develop classroom specific formative assessments and have classroom specific data to inform their instruction. Additionally, the State predicts that the increased number of CCSS-aligned items in EAGLE, across all grades and subjects, will allow teachers in non-tested grades and subjects to measure student growth and achievement.

In summer 2012, LDOE contracted with a vendor to develop CCSS-aligned test items for the EAGLE test item bank. The vendor developed a set of sample items, which were reviewed and approved by LDOE staff. The vendor is on track to develop the first set of test items for ELA and mathematics (36 ELA and 100 mathematic items) for third through twelfth grades by January 2013 and upload those items into EAGLE beginning in February 2013.

To ensure that items developed by the contractor align with CCSS, LDOE created a protocol for reviewing and approving contractor-developed EAGLE test bank items. During item review meetings, LDOE staff check for flaws in the test items, determine alignment to CCSS, ensure the answer keys match the items, and provide feedback to the contractor if changes are needed. The State also conducts reviews of the system usage data to determine current functionality, which will inform upgrades to EAGLE's reporting functions.

### Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

During Year 1, the State implemented planned activities, including contracting with a vendor for test item development and conducting hands-on training workshops for EAGLE users. Louisiana developed and conducted trainings for EAGLE users with an emphasis on teaching participants how to utilize the EAGLE system and data from the system to inform instruction.

LDOE reports that during Year 1, EAGLE usage increased. In the SY 2011-2012 APR, Louisiana reported that there were 2,123,642 log-ins to EAGLE in SY 2011-2012, exceeding its target of 1,900,000 log-ins. Additionally, the State reported a total of 1,489,397 teacher-created test forms for benchmark assessments were completed by students in EAGLE, which is an increase from SY 2010-2011 and exceeds the State's SY 2011-2012 target.

It will be a challenge for the State to keep pace with the contractor and assure that EAGLE items are of high quality and can be made to EAGLE users in a timely manner. LDOE also will need to ensure that work tasked for EAGLE contractor is not duplicative of PARCC activities.

Additionally, the State's Race to the Top plan includes an agreement from participating LEAs to schedule job-embedded professional development opportunities during the school day for teachers to reflect on student achievement data and adjust instruction based on those data. Current performance measures provide quantitative data (*i.e.*, number of log-ins to EAGLE, number of tests forms created by teachers) but it is not clear how LDOE will determine the extent to which teachers review EAGLE data to inform classroom interactions.

# Great Teachers and Leaders

Race to the Top States are developing comprehensive systems of educator effectiveness by adopting clear approaches to measuring student growth; designing and implementing rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals; conducting annual evaluations that include timely and constructive feedback; and using evaluation information to inform professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, and tenure decisions. In addition, Race to the Top States are providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals, ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals, improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs, and providing effective supports to all educators.

## Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

In the past year and a half, Louisiana developed and piloted a new evaluation and support system for teachers and leaders, known as Compass.<sup>12</sup> Compass was preceded by Act 54, the State law that requires that every teacher and leader in Louisiana be evaluated annually and that 50 percent of their evaluations be based on measures of student growth, with the remaining 50 percent based on other qualitative measures of performance.

LDOE developed a web-based Human Capital Information System (HCIS) to provide an online portal for Compass through which educators and evaluators can obtain data; engage in collaborative goal-setting and professional growth planning; receive interactive observation feedback and self-reflection; obtain individualized professional development; and get a final effectiveness assessment.<sup>13</sup> The HCIS also allows school, district and State leaders to run reports on the performance of the educators for whom they have permission to access evaluation data, to analyze trends in performance, and to monitor the implementation of the evaluation process.

Throughout spring 2012, Louisiana conducted awareness-building efforts around the Compass evaluation system including in-person informational sessions, webinars, and the publication and posting of informational resources. Utilizing feedback from the SY 2011-2012 pilot of Compass, the State modified the evaluation process and rubric.

Louisiana contracted with The New Teacher Project (TNTTP) to develop and deliver Compass training, tools and resources specifically designed to build evaluator understanding of the evaluation system and capacity to implement it with fidelity. TNTTP trained Network Support Teams who re-delivered the evaluator training in LEAs. The State reported that Network Support Teams

trained approximately 5,000 teacher evaluators over the course of summer 2012 on the Compass evaluation rubric and the development of Student Learning Targets. The State reports that feedback from Compass training participants has been positive.

## Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

Creating a strong supply and equitable distribution of effective teachers and leaders are two primary components of the State's reform agenda. The State has committed to identifying good teacher prospects, particularly in STEM subjects; recruiting them, interviewing them, and placing them in high need positions where they are needed most in the State. The State initially planned to use project funds to provide training to LEAs on effective recruiting, hiring, and placement strategies. Instead, the State requested and received approval to use funds to support the Statewide Staffing Initiative.

The Statewide Staffing Initiative was designed to ensure that all students have access to effective teachers and leaders. The Staffing Initiative is also designed to help LEAs align current staffing policies, performance management requirements, and salary schedules to the requirements of the Act 1 legislation.<sup>14</sup>

The State identified a vendor to develop training and resources to support LEAs in implementing Act 1 requirements. The vendor developed training for LEA Human Resource Directors and established a training schedule. In particular, this training focused on how to revise salary schedules based on measures of educator effectiveness. Additionally, the contractor is in the process of developing detailed compensation guidance and models as well as training for LEAs on how to use those models to revise current compensation policies.

<sup>12</sup>Initially the system was named Comprehensive Performance Management System (CPMS); the name was changed to Compass in spring 2012.

<sup>13</sup>Though not part of the State's Race to the Top plan, HCIS will play an important role in collecting evaluation data on a large scale, vital to implementation of the LEAs' evaluation systems.

<sup>14</sup>Act 1 allows districts and schools to use measures of teacher effectiveness to guide personnel policies and decisions and calls for teachers to be compensated based on experience, license area, and effectiveness, without decreasing any teacher's salary or affecting retirement. The statute preserves tenure for current teachers, except the small number who earn an "ineffective" rating.

# Great Teachers and Leaders

By the July 2012 deadline, all LEAs revised their hiring and tenure policies to comply with Act 1. LDOE received superintendent contracts from all LEAs and reviewed them for alignment with the requirements of Act 1. As of October 2012, all LEAs in Louisiana submitted their Reduction in Force policies to LDOE for review. The State reported that approximately 97 percent of the policies submitted were aligned with the requirements of Act 1, but that four LEAs submitted policies that still included seniority as a criterion for making decisions around staff retention or release.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Several of the timelines for planned work in Year 1 in this area were adjusted or delayed; furthermore, the State chose to extend activities from only participating LEAs to all LEAs in the State. The State also made adjustments to the timeline by which measures of student growth for non-tested grades and subjects would be refined. That work will begin in May 2013, instead of summer 2012 as initially planned. LDOE intended to conduct an analysis to support the refinement of these measures following the pilot of the evaluation process and rubric during SY 2011-2012. However, due to the revisions of the evaluation process and rubric after the pilot, LDOE will conduct its analysis at the end of SY 2012-2013 when additional data from all LEAs in the State will be available.

The State also adjusted its timeline for developing training and resources to support LEA implementation of Compass. This work, originally scheduled to begin in March 2012, did not begin until July 2012 as additional time was needed to make adjustments based on the pilot.

Despite changes to its Race to the Top plan, the Network Support Teams provided training to approximately 5,000 evaluators by September 2012 on the evaluation rubric and the development of Student Learning Targets. As of November 2012, the State reported that 95 percent of teachers have been assigned to an evaluator in the HCIS. However, LEA utilization of the HCIS is proceeding slower than anticipated. Only approximately 40 percent of teachers had entered two Student Learning Targets in the HCIS and entry of observation data after the first round of observations was 11 percent complete at that time.

The State has also taken steps to prepare LEAs for implementation of the new Act 1 requirements and most projects associated with those activities are on track. However, the hiring of a project manager is behind schedule. Leadership will be important in the analysis of HCIS data to understand current staffing practices, determine LEA needs to effectively implement Act 1, and prepare Network Support Teams to assist LEAs with Act 1 implementation.

## Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Race to the Top States are supporting LEAs' implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of four school intervention models.<sup>15</sup>

The State is using its Race to the Top funds to supplement the work already being successfully undertaken by the Recovery School District by investing in the incubation and scaling up of high-performing charter schools across the State. The State's Race to the Top strategy is to build capacity within LEAs to turn around the lowest-achieving schools through the development of Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) and providing funding for new charter schools. The State's plan includes identifying and recruiting high performing CMOs; matching high performing CMOs with low performing schools; and providing technical assistance to CMOs to applying for funding for new charter schools. Once funds are awarded to successful applicants, LDOE is committed to providing

technical assistance and monitoring during the start-up phase of newly funded charter schools to ensure high performance.

LDOE released the application to fund new charter schools or replicate existing high-performing schools in Louisiana – the 2012 Call for Quality Schools – in fall 2012. LDOE contracted with a national association to manage the application and review process. The national association recruited independent experts to serve on panels to review applications to ensure that high-quality applications were approved and that funding decisions were data-driven.

The State received 52 charter applications through the Call for Quality Schools request for applications. Although the State

<sup>15</sup>Race to the Top States' plans include supporting their LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.

- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

# Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

initially planned to take its recommendations for funding to the BESE in December 2012, additional time was needed to finalize recommendations. LDOE made recommendations to BESE at its January 2013 meeting. BESE concurred with the State's recommendation and approved 14 applicants as new Charter Operators. The State allocated funding to successful applicants in January 2013. Race to the Top funds are supporting six of the charter schools, which are scheduled to open in SY 2013-2014.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Louisiana reported in its SY 2011-2012 APR that 62 percent of low-performing schools in participating LEAs posted increases in

their School Performance Scores (SPS) equal to or greater than five percent exceeding the State's goal of 55 percent.

Louisiana also reported that school intervention models were initiated in 37 schools in SY 2011-2012, with 17 schools initiating the transformation model, 4 schools initiating the restart model, and 16 schools initiating the turnaround model.

In general, except for some slight delays in taking its recommendations to the BESE, the State has been successful in awarding Race to the Top funds to support new charter schools. The State will need to clarify its plan for monitoring charter schools, ensuring the new charter schools meet LDOE's goal of being "high-performing." The State also needs to clarify how it will scale and incubate "high-performing" charter operators to serve more schools as stated in its Race to the Top application.

## Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

### State's STEM initiatives

The State has committed to implement a strong STEM curriculum and provide related supports through its work in the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments; supporting educators in accessing and using data; and ensuring the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.

The State has incorporated STEM advancement in a number of its Race to the Top activities previously discussed in this report. STEM advancements include the development of new and revising current AP and STEM-focused AP courses to assure alignment with CCSS and increasing the number of students taking AP and STEM-focused AP courses via LVS. In Year 1, LDOE responded to the need to improve the LVS enrollment process with a new online registration system. LDOE also expanded professional development opportunities for teachers and leaders with pre-AP and AP summer institutes focused on STEM courses. Previously discussed upgrades to the EAGLE system may help provide educators access to assessments to calculate growth in non-tested grades and STEM subjects. Finally, the Statewide Staffing Initiative is intended to contribute to STEM advancement by providing district staff and school leaders with the ability to access and utilize the educator pipeline to staff the lowest-performing schools with highly effective educators, particularly in STEM subjects.

### Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The State has invested in a STEM Goal Office to advance statewide STEM education. The office is leading the integration of the STEM components of the CCSS into the Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum, and is also charged with assisting in the delivery of training for the revised curriculum.

The State faces several challenges in this area. First, LDOE will need to ensure that work tasked for the EAGLE contractor, including developing items for the EAGLE test bank, is not duplicative of PARCC activities. Next, LDOE will need to closely track the development of the LVS online registration system for AP courses to ensure that the system is operational and available for student and parent use at the start of the SY 2013-2014. Finally, as reported earlier the State requested and received approval to use funds to support the Statewide Staffing Initiative. While the Initiative was designed to ensure that all students have access to effective teachers and leaders, the State will be challenged with maintaining the commitment to and focus on recruiting and placing STEM teachers where they are needed most in the State.

## Looking Ahead to Year 2

In Year 2 the State will continue to provide guidance and support to the Network Support Teams as the teams assist LEAs with CCSS implementation, transition to the Compass, and use of EAGLE. LDOE will evaluate Network Support Team work to identify training and resources these teams will need in Year 2. The State will focus attention on the need to develop and implement a continuous improvement process that includes timely feedback from teachers, principals, administrators and Network Support Teams. Network Support Teams will engage with LEAs to set goals for SY 2013-2014 as well as identify cross-LEA issues and challenges for PLCs. The State will also focus on utilizing the CCSS Educator Cadre to assist with CCSS implementation within LEAs and work to increase the membership and training of the CCSS Educator Cadre.

A major focus in Year 2 will be EAGLE expansion and enhanced functionality. Contractors will be responsible for developing additional test bank items for EAGLE, creating training on the new test bank items, and enhancing the reporting functions of EAGLE. Year 2 EAGLE training will target technical support to districts in two key areas – using data to improve instructional practices and using EAGLE as a professional development resource to respond to development needs of teachers identified during the evaluation process. LDOE staff will continue to review, approve, and upload EAGLE items for district-wide use.

The State will continue moving forward its STEM agenda with a number of planned activities during Year 2. With contractor support, LDOE will provide additional AP and STEM-focused AP courses, in the classroom and via LVS. Also planned for Year 2 is the release of the online registration system for LVS courses. LDOE staff will provide technical support to users as well as monitor the system's activities to determine the need for system upgrades and modifications. LDOE will also work to increase student access to LVS by providing technology upgrades in selected schools. LDOE will provide teachers and administrators with the opportunity to participate in pre-AP, AP, and STEM professional development via summer institutes in Year 2.

Compass support will continue in Year 2. LDOE will work with consultants to develop resources for the Compass toolbox as well as other resources and materials to assist district implementation of Compass. LDOE staff will work with consultants to build capacity of the Network Support Teams and members of the Teacher Leader Group. Additional training on Compass enhancements and other teacher leader evaluation topics (*i.e.*, value-added data analysis, student learning targets, etc.) will be provided to these two groups to continue to build capacity, allowing them to deliver more targeted technical supports to districts and schools. Finally, the State will conduct quarterly Compass institutes to address emerging issues common across districts.

With a goal of eliminating the disproportionate number of ineffective teachers in the highest need schools, LDOE will work with LEAs to ensure alignment with Act 1 in Year 2. LDOE, with contract support, will provide training to Network Support Teams on Act 1 compliance as it relates to hiring and staffing, reduction in force policies, and compensation. Network Support Teams will in turn provide ongoing support, training, and resources to LEAs in implementing Act 1. Finally, a second cohort of charter schools will be funded in Year 2.

## Budget

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For the State's expenditures through June 30, 2012, please see the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

For State budget information, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.

# Glossary

**Alternative routes to certification:** Pathways to certification that are authorized under the State's laws or regulations that allow the establishment and operation of teacher and administrator preparation programs in the State, and that have the following characteristics (in addition to standard features such as demonstration of subject-matter mastery, and high-quality instruction in pedagogy and in addressing the needs of all students in the classroom including English learners and students with disabilities): (a) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education; (b) are selective in accepting candidates; (c) provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching; (d) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and (e) upon completion, award the same level of certification that traditional preparation programs award upon completion.

**Amendment requests:** In the event that adjustments are needed to a State's approved Race to the Top plan, the grantee must submit an amendment request to the Department for consideration. Such requests may be prompted by an updated assessment of needs in that area, revised cost estimates, lessons learned from prior implementation efforts, or other circumstances. Grantees may propose revisions to goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, provided that the following conditions are met: the revisions do not result in the grantee's failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this award and the program's statutory and regulatory provisions; the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal; and the Department and the grantee mutually agree in writing to the revisions. The Department has sole discretion to determine whether to approve the revisions or modifications. If approved by the Department, a letter with a description of the amendment and any relevant conditions will be sent notifying the grantee of approval. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/index.html>.)

**America COMPETES Act elements:** The twelve indicators specified in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act are: (1) a unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system; (2) student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information; (3) student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs; (4) the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems; (5) a State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability; (6) yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)); (7) information on students not tested by grade and

subject; (8) a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students; (9) student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned; (10) student-level college-readiness test scores; (11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and (12) other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

**American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA):** On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the ARRA, historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. The Department of Education received a \$97.4 billion appropriation.

**Annual Performance Report (APR):** Report submitted by each grantee with outcomes to date, performance against the measures established in its application, and other relevant data. The Department uses data included in the APRs to provide Congress and the public with detailed information regarding each State's progress on meeting the goals outlined in its application. The final State APRs are found at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

**College- and career-ready standards:** State-developed standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time students graduate from high school.

**Common Core State Standards (CCSS):** Kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) ELA and mathematics standards developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including States, governors, chief State school officers, content experts, States, teachers, school administrators, and parents. The standards establish clear and consistent goals for learning that will prepare America's children for success in college and careers. As of December 2011, the CCSS were adopted by 45 States and the District of Columbia.

The **education reform areas** for Race to the Top: (1) Standards and Assessments: Adopting rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career; (2) Data Systems to Support Instruction: Building data systems that measure student success and support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement; (3) Great Teachers and Great Leaders: Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and (4) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools: Supporting LEAs' implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing school intervention models.

**Effective teacher:** A teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (*e.g.*, at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs,

or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance.

**High-minority school:** A school designation defined by the State in a manner consistent with its Teacher Equity Plan. The State should provide, in its Race to the Top application, the definition used.

**High-poverty school:** Consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

**Highly effective teacher:** A teacher whose students achieve high rates (*e.g.*, one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

**Instructional improvement systems (IIS):** Technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as instructional planning; gathering information (*e.g.*, through formative assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), interim assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.

**Invitational priorities:** Areas of focus that the Department invited States to address in their Race to the Top applications. Applicants did not earn extra points for addressing these focus areas, but many grantees chose to create and fund activities to advance reforms in these areas.

**Involved LEAs:** LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement those specific portions of the State's plan that necessitate

full or nearly-full statewide implementation, such as transitioning to a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Involved LEAs do not receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that it must sub grant to LEAs in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA, but States may provide other funding to involved LEAs under the State's Race to the Top grant in a manner that is consistent with the State's application.

**Participating LEAs:** LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must sub grant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year at the time of the award, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

The **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information please see <http://www.parcconline.org/>.)

**Persistently lowest-achieving schools:** As determined by the State, (i) any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and (ii) any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years. To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State must take into account both (i) the academic achievement of the "all students" group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State's assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and (ii) the school's lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

**Qualifying evaluation systems:** Educator evaluation systems that meet the following criteria: rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation

systems for teachers and principals that: (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

**Reform Support Network (RSN):** In partnership with the ISU, the RSN offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to grantees of the Race to the Top education reform initiative. The RSN's purpose is to support the Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.

The **School Improvement Grants (SIG)** program is authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the ESEA. Funds are awarded to States to help them turn around persistently lowest-achieving schools. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

**School intervention models:** A State's Race to the Top plan describes how it will support its LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

**Single sign-on:** A user authentication process that permits a user to enter one name and password in order to access multiple applications.

The **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information please see <http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/default.aspx>.)

The **State Scope of Work:** A detailed document for the State project that reflects the grantee's approved Race to the Top application. The State Scope of Work includes items such as the State's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.) Additionally, all participating LEAs are required to submit Scope of Work documents, consistent with State requirements, to the State for its review and approval.

**Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS):** Data systems that enhance the ability of States to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records. The SLDS help States, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders to make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes, as well as to facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. (For additional information please see [http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/about\\_SLDS.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/about_SLDS.asp).)

**Student achievement:** For the purposes of this report, student achievement (a) for tested grades and subjects is (1) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (2) other measures of student learning, such as those described in paragraph (b) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms; and (b) for non-tested grades and subjects, alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

**Student growth:** The change in student achievement (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) for an individual student between two or more points in time. A State may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

**Value-added models (VAMs):** A specific type of growth model based on changes in test scores over time. VAMs are complex statistical models that generally attempt to take into account student or school background characteristics in order to isolate the amount of learning attributable to a specific teacher or school. Teachers or schools that produce more than typical or expected growth are said to "add value."